DOE Radiological Assistance Program (RAP) Assets

Ken Keaton presented the RAP response capabilities and other DOE assets for assisting Federal, State, and local responders. He covered the structure and deployment of the RAP teams, the Federal Radiological Monitoring and Assessment Center, Aerial Measuring System, Atmospheric Release Advisory Capability, Radiological Emergency Assistance Center/Training Site, Accident Response Group, and Nuclear Emergency Search Team.

Mr. Keaton clarified the roles and responsibilities of RAP. Each RAP team is deployed at a regional level and consists of seven volunteers. They include public information resources for relaying information about RAP. One participant questioned how the RAP team could get close enough to the incident and reach a conclusion. The railroad industry faces these types of problems when cars derail. Participants also wanted to know who determines when the RAP team calls in additional resources.

The participants agreed that Federal resources are good for recovery and should not be expected to arrive earlier than four hours after being notified. Federal responders may also be delayed because they require permission from the state team to enter the area. The local responders should be trained how to implement scene control and protective measures for an incident involving hazardous materials. For incidents involving shipments of classified radioactive materials, the Federal response time differs. Participants were told to notify the National Response Center to activate the Federal Radiological Emergency Response Plan (FRERP).

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Resources

Bernice Zaidel explained the broader role of FEMA in supporting state and local organizations. First, she introduced the FEMA grant program. The Emergency Management Preparedness Grant (EMPG) permits the states to retain one third of the grant for administrative purposes or other items deemed necessary. The other portion goes to the local emergency management directors to support salaries and expenses related to planning and training. EMPGs are block grants with essentially no strings attached. The money can be used for planning, training, or equipment. To get the money, the state must justify their program. This year, the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) program allocated approximately $700,000 to tribal programs.

Session participants asked questions about the distribution process and the matching funds requirements. Ms. Zaidel explained the initial request goes to the FEMA regional office for review. Each FEMA regional office determines the distribution within its region. A formula is used to determine how the funds are distributed. The formula considers all hazards and overall risk factors. There is a matching requirement which may be 50/50.

Ms. Zaidel gave information about the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) and the National Fire Academy. When responders enroll at either facility, FEMA reimburses travel expenses and provides free lodging. The student pays for meals. FEMA publishes brochures that describe training provided at each facility. The training supports specific hazards including radiological. In many cases, the training materials have been given to the states for delivery as Afield@ courses.

FEMA also offers independent study courses which almost anyone can take. These courses can be

obtained through the FEMA web site or from EMI. These courses usually present training only at the awareness level.

One session participant asked why the Federal agencies do not have a consolidated training program to eliminate duplicate courses. Ms. Zaidel mentioned the draft compendium of courses related to transporting radioactive materials. It will be presented to the Federal Radiological Planning and Coordination Committee (FRPCC) training subcommittee. Through the FRPCC, other Federal agencies will be asked to include courses. The compendium identifies similar courses and may eliminate the development of duplicate training.

Environmental Protection Agency Resources.

Bill Belanger reviewed the FRERP and how it provides assistance to states. When an emergency occurs, the state is responsible for taking care of its people (except when a disaster is declared). States may request Federal support which may arrive about six hours after notification. The FRERP designates one Federal agency as the Lead Federal Agency (LFA) to coordinate support. The LFA varies based on the incident. EPA serves as the LFA only for incidents involving nuclear weapons from a foreign country or emergencies related to superfund.

EPA recently revised its radiation response capability plan. The EPA response does not preclude the use of the RAP team - especially for anything owned by DOE or when you need a quick response. EPA responds in concert with other Federal agencies usually focuses on consequence management. Because EPA on scene responders receive only basic radiation safety training, they are usually more adept in a chemical response. An EPA team may need assistance from a DOE RAP teams which specialize in radiological incidents.

When other funding mechanisms are available for conducting clean up activities, then EPA does not get involved. However, if needed, the EPA responder can commit up to $200,000 to pay a contractor to perform clean up duties without further approval. With verbal approval, the amount can be increased to $2,000,000. This funding ensures clean up activities get started right away.

Mr. Belanger explained when the information from the manifest is known, then the LFA is the NRC. The NRC orders the licensee to do the cleanup. When the licensee cannot do a cleanup, the state can call a RAP team or EPA can be called in tandem with the RAP team. When you don=t know who owns the material, then the LFA is the EPA which begins a superfund response.

Mr. Belanger described an incident which illustrates the manner in which EPA can assist states. The incident began with the detection of 40 cubic yards of radioactive automotive waste. The local responders called in the state radiological health department who determined the source. The state contacted the regional DOE RAP team which responded, confirmed the source, and provided additional information. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) was contacted because the source is a regulated isotope. A long distance telephone conference call served as the unified command and the various agencies decided on a plan forward. With the help of Los Alamos National Laboratory and NRC, they were able to determine the make, model, and serial number for the source. With this information the owner of the source was determined and the NRC became the LFA.

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) State Radiological Training Mix. Tom Hughes outlined the steps taken to develop the PEMA Radiological Preparedness Program (copies were distributed). Through coordination with numerous agencies across Pennsylvania (PA), PEMA determined the training format, developed training categories, identified the appropriate training for radiological assistants, compiled the training required for the radiological response team members, and ensured the radiological monitors trained by the industry received support during a response. It also required providing MERRTT to the state police and the Department of Environmental Protection, plus adding Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance training for state inspectors into the training circular. From feedback, PEMA determined some training can be revised. For all classes, a proficiency check is done and sometimes the MERRTT tabletop is used when unable to conduct a drill.

To benefit the responders, PEMA has teamed with the Indiana University of PA, Frederick Community College (EMI Courses), DOD military retirement points, PA Department of Health, and Resident Course to issue continuing education units for training. The accreditation is determined on a case by case basis.

The training covers the Radiological Is, II s, and III s. Radiological Is can teach the first four modules of MERRTT. State fire academy pays for students to take the adult methodology course. PEMA certified instructors follow the materials PEMA tells them to use and they must meet PA certification requirements. Only courses offered through PEMA can be taught. PEMA's course list matches the fire academy's list. In January 2001, the trainers will gather to determine and discuss concerns that have arisen.

Pam Weeks said most of PEMA's training funds come from grants. PEMA partners with other PA agencies to save money and pool resources. PA has problems getting training to its more than 2,500 municipalities and 67 counties. The grants force the groups to plan for future training. Conducting a RODEO at Fort Indiantown Gap brought the radiological instructors and personnel together. The terrorism grants support conduct of the RODEO. The Vigilant Lion exercise CD ROM is available through the TEPP web site or on CD ROM.